

Rick Hutchinson

The Honorable Stephanie A. Gallagher  
United States District Judge  
c/o Office of the Federal Public Defender  
100 South Charles Street  
Tower II, 9th Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Your Honor:

My name is Rick Hutchinson. I am a mathematician and cybersecurity researcher – with the National Security Agency for 18 years, and currently as a defense contractor. I met Mark in 2017, ten years into my NSA career, when I took a position in the Commercial Engagement Center where he served as a senior technical director. Over the next five years I came to know Mark as a capable and dedicated public servant, a cornerstone of the CEC’s mission, and a wealth of knowledge and insight in a necessarily complex and nuanced working environment.

My first ten years at NSA were spent in some of the most tight-lipped corners of the Agency. As one can imagine, coming to a more external-facing brought with it a nearly endless train of questions and uncertainties. And from the first day, Mark’s door was always open. He always had time to mentor employees, with a willingness to address all questions and concerns ranging from the mundane day-to-day, to mission-specific problems, to broader career-focused questions about navigating the vast institution that is not just NSA, but the intelligence community as a whole. Mark’s thoughtful guidance was instrumental in helping me to grow as a representative of NSA to the broader intelligence community and the commercial world.

Beyond that, Mark also took an active interest in advocating for his people where he could. When my (now) wife took a post-doc position in another city, I came to Mark expressing my desire to be able to better balance that development, alongside my desire to stay close to the CEC mission. Without hesitation Mark exercised his own network to help me seek suitable roles within the community that might satisfy those mutual goals, and wrote letters of support and recommendation as needed. The time he spent with me tackling this question, with its broader career implications, was truly above and beyond.

I know this prosecution has been hard on Mark – not just because of the obvious and immediate impacts, but because of the efforts he’d devised and put in motion, that he would have to leave behind. I know this because Mark had been eligible to retire for years when I met him in 2017 – and even by 2022, he was steadfast that he wouldn’t retire until he’d seen those efforts through. And in a broader sense, we’ve all felt that loss, too. A friend always described Mark as having a capital “P” Presence – and those of us who tried to carry the torch without him have found it that much harder to keep the flames lit.

But despite it, Mark has maintained his dedication to service, spending his post-NSA time working with the Red Cross to aid victims of house fires. Even in the ashes of his own former life, he chose to spend his time helping others rebuild. That mindset and devotion pre-dated this prosecution – I saw it in him every day at the office, from the first day I met him. And in the face of one of those questions we each *think* we can answer for ourselves – but can never *know* until we must – Mark’s perseverance in selflessness of action is a testament to his character.

Sincerely,



Rick Hutchinson